

Part 403 – Employment

Subpart H – Career Intern Program

CO403.93(d)(1)

§CO403.92 Policy.

(e) Definitions.

(1) Career Development Folder (CDF). An individual file containing the documentation of the intern's development. The staff office is accountable to maintain this folder.

(2) Mentor - A senior manager or staff specialist who, through service and performance, has demonstrated technical competence and aptitude for developing program interns. The mentor provides the intern with guidance, counseling, and advice that supplements and/or complements the guidance, counseling, and advice provided by the supervisor of record. Mentors are assigned to interns by the Human Resources Office (HRO).

(3) Evaluation panel - A panel consisting of, at a minimum, the supervisor of record, a Human Resources representative (if requested by management), the coach, and a program management official of equal or higher grade or rank than the supervisor of record. The program management official must be in the same occupational field as the intern.

(f) Accelerated Promotions.

(1) Because both the formal and on-the-job training described in this program meet the definition of "intensive training" under 5 CFR 410.307(2), the exceptional intern may complete a given developmental phase more quickly than anticipated. Interns who are selected at the GS-5 or GS-7 level may achieve credit for training at an accelerated rate of 2 months of credit for each month of intensive training for qualifications and time-in-grade purposes. If the evaluation panel members determine that the intern has satisfactorily completed the requirements and attained the competencies required at the GS-5 or GS-7 level, they can recommend to the supervisor of record that the intern be promoted up to 6 months early. There is no mandatory entitlement to early promotions. These accelerated promotions can only be made from the GS-5 and/or GS-7 levels. (See 5 CFR 410.307(a)(2) for accelerated training.)

§CO403.93 Responsibilities.

(d) Supervisor.

(1) Convenes the intern evaluation panel and serves as chairperson.

CO403-5(1)

Part 403 – Employment

Subpart H – Career Intern Program

CO403.96(a)(3)

(e) Intern Evaluation Panel.

(1) The intern evaluation panel will periodically meet to evaluate the progress of an intern. A panel must consist of, at a minimum, the supervisor of record, human resources representative (subject to availability), the mentor, and a program management official of equal grade or rank or higher than the supervisor of record. The program management official should be in the same occupational field as the intern. A panel member must designate an alternate to serve on the panel in his/her absence. The panel:

Reviews and evaluates each intern's development activities and progress in the program; Ensures that training and developmental activities are accomplished within established timeframes; and

- Should meet at least quarterly during the intern's first phase to review intern's progress;
- Should meet at least quarterly or semi-annually for continuing phases of the program;
- Shall meet at least annually to review and evaluate the intern's progress and to make recommendations regarding promotion to the next grade level;
- Completes and signs the Evaluation Panel Summary, to document the evaluation of the intern's progress; and
- Completes and signs the Recommendation of Evaluation Panel, for each employee eligible for promotion or assignment to the target position.

§CO403.96 Training.

(a) Development of the Individual Development Plan (IDP). The following procedures apply when developing an IDP:

(1) Consideration should first be given to the competencies that have already been acquired by the intern through academic training, experience or other means. Identified accomplishments will be noted in writing with appropriate dates of completion.

(2) Competencies to be acquired during the course of the training program should then be identified. For each competency, developmental activities will be identified, scheduled, and recorded on the IDP.

(3) The IDP must provide for the accomplishment of the intern's development at the entry and succeeding grade levels in 12-month phases. The supervisor of record may approve a shorter phase, in which case, adjustments must be made to the IDP. Where feasible,

CO403-5(2)

Part 403 – Employment

Subpart H – Career Intern Program

CO403.96(b)4

supervisors shall divide each phase into specified numbers of weeks for the accomplishment of an area of development and/or attainment of a level of proficiency demonstrated in the performance of assignments must be considered in evaluating the intern for promotion or assignment to the target position. An intern cannot be considered for promotion under this agreement without having demonstrated fully successful performance under the performance management system. The preparation of the IDP must be completed in consultation with the intern. An IDP is a flexible document that can be changed as the intern progresses through the program. Each phase of the IDP should normally be for a 12-month period. This can be adjusted depending on the progress of the intern as well as the availability of training and scheduling of rotational assignments. This IDP will be included in the intern's CDF. A copy should be submitted to the HRO for review within 30 days of the intern's entry into the program.

(b) Evaluation of Intern's Progress.

(1) Evaluation of the intern's developmental progress should be consistent with the evaluation of the intern's performance against his/her critical elements and performance standards. Work assignment supervisors must evaluate the intern upon completion of each developmental assignment and provide feedback to the intern and supervisor of record.

(2) During his/her first phase of development, the intern should be evaluated quarterly by an evaluation panel but at least annually. The panel determines whether the intern has attained the level of progress and development required in the areas specified by the IDP and completes the Evaluation Panel Summary form for inclusion in the intern's CDF. In making its evaluation, the panel should review the intern's CDF and may interview the intern and various work assignment supervisors.

(3) The intern should be evaluated at management's discretion either quarterly or semi-annually during the second or subsequent phases of development by the evaluation panel.

(4) When recommending a promotion or assignment to the target position for an intern, the panel must certify that the developmental requirements have been met by completing the Recommendation of Evaluation Panel form. Submission of an SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, requesting promotion or assignment to the target position must have the panel's recommendation attached. At least 10 work days before the intern meets all other promotion requirements, the evaluation panel must recommend an intern for promotion or for extension of a promotion or assignment to the target position.

CO403-5(3)

Part 403 – Employment

Subpart H – Career Intern Program

CO403.98(a)(1)(iii)

(5) If the panel determines that during any evaluation period the intern has not attained the level of progress and development specified in the IDP, it may recommend an extension of the developmental phase on the Evaluation Panel Summary form. For any extension other than for illness, the supervisor must ensure that the provisions and regulations of the NRCS Performance Management Policy is met. The evaluation panel may recommend to the supervisor of record the actual length of the extension period to be afforded the intern.

(6) At the end of the specified extension period, the panel convenes to review the progress of the intern. An intern who does not progress as planned during the extension period may be subject to removal from the program.

§CO403.98 Records Maintenance.

(a) Documentation and Record Keeping.

(1) The CDF must contain the following items:

(i) The IDP and any changes made by the supervisor.

(ii) The Evaluation Panel Summary and the Recommendation of the Evaluation Panel that will generate during the program.

(iii) Documentation related to the intern's development or any other records relating to the intern's progress under the program. The CDF should be maintained for two years after the completion of the program.

CO403-5(4)